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DE RUEHGO #0330/01 1280817
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 070817Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7504
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1132
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4679
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 8220
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5782
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 3651
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1537
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 RANGOON 000330

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR USAID/OFDA, EAP/MLS, S/ES-O-CMS, DS/CC AND
DS/IP/EAP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA: CYCLONE NARGIS SITREP NO. 3

REF: RANGOON 319 AND PREVIOUS

SUMMARY

11. (SBU) POST OPERATIONS: As of May 7, Embassy Rangoon resumed operating on city power again. We continue to receive two diesel shipments per day. The consular section has suspended visa operations until May 21 to focus on American Citizen Services. Post's Authorized Departure Task Force met to collect numbers of family members planning to depart. We will report these shortly.

12. (SBU) SITUATION ON THE GROUND: On May 6, state media reported over 21,793 persons killed and 40,695 missing in Irrawaddy Division and 671 killed and 359 missing in Rangoon Division as a result of Nargis. However, NGO sources reported over 100,000 were killed in Irrawaddy Division. Food, water, and fuel continued to be in short supply throughout Rangoon with sources reporting the situation in Irrawaddy Division as critical. Electricity was restored to a limited number of downtown Rangoon neighborhoods, but most of the city was still without power. More gasoline and CNG stations opened, and we saw more public transportation operating today. Burmese Port Authority officials told us they believe the Thilawa port, 25 kilometers southeast of Rangoon will be fully operational in two weeks, but we are seeking to independently confirm this estimate.

EMBASSY OPERATIONS

13. (SBU) STAFFING AND OPERATIONS: There was no change to Embassy operating hours or liberal leave policy. We will provide loans to FSNs today to meet immediate needs. The consular section suspended visa operations until May 21 to devote resources to American Citizen Services.

14. (SBU) AUTHORIZED DEPARTURE AND FLIGHTS: Post's Authorized Departure Task Force met on May 7 and will meet daily as long as necessary. We are collecting numbers on how many family members wish to depart and will report them to the Department this evening. Our travel section reported there are between six and ten commercial airline seats to Bangkok each day, and between five and nine seats to Singapore and Kuala Lumpur are

available each day.

15. (SBU) FUEL AND POWER: As of May 7, the Embassy resumed operating on city power. Management reported it received two of the five truckloads of diesel fuel we ordered (3,840 gallons) on May 7 and expect one truckload of high octane fuel tomorrow. As of May 7, the Embassy had 37,000 gallons of diesel fuel on hand and 2,700 gallons of high octane. GSO has a commitment from the vendor to continue to provide us two truckloads of diesel per day, and is negotiating with to secure more diesel and high octane shipments.

16. (SBU) WATER: The Embassy continues to have adequate water supplies and purification capacity on hand.

17. (SBU) SECURITY: No criminal incidents involving American staff reported. The breach in the Embassy's perimeter has been temporarily repaired.

18. (SBU) OTHER: Post has established a local FSN relief fund to assist FSN's with immediate needs, and has applied for assistance from the Department's Global FSN Relief Fund. Bangkok also has set up a fund for Embassy Rangoon FSNs.

SITUATION ON THE GROUND

19. (SBU) CASUALTIES AND DAMAGE: On the evening of May 6, Burmese state media reported over 21,793 persons were killed and 40,695 were missing in Irrawaddy Division and 671 were killed and 359 missing in Rangoon Division. A local NGO with

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staff in Irrawaddy Division, reported government officials in the city of Laputa told them 100,000 persons were killed and all structures were destroyed in that city. NGO staff who surveyed Pyinsalu Island reported that only 4,600 of the island's 40,000 residents remain, and most are injured or sick. Additionally, local sources reported the villages of Thaungle, Ayardaw, Thapyaysate, and Thanggangyi in Irrawaddy Division were completely submerged. Our contacts informed us that eleven relief camps have been established by local monasteries and churches in Myo Mya, but all lacked basic equipment and facilities. Local sources estimate between 2,500 and 3,000 persons are in these camps. Initial reports from the city of Patheingyi in Irrawaddy Division indicated the city also sustained severe damage and was without power and water. We have sent one officer to the delta area to report on damage and another to Bago, north of Rangoon. A police contact reported the GOB had dropped rice by helicopter to flooded areas of the delta.

110. (SBU) RECOVERY: GSO's contacts at the Burmese Port Authority told us they believe the Myanmar International Terminals Thilawa port will be fully operational in two weeks. This port is located 25 miles southeast of Rangoon near the city of Thanlyin. A businessman who supplies machinery to that port told us one of three cranes at Thilawa collapsed into the water. He added that Asia World's port was open and operational. We will gather more information on damage to the port facilities and their normal capabilities and capacity. Elements of the 77th, 66th, and 33rd Light Infantry Divisions were seen in Rangoon clearing debris from the road, with the 77th and 66th were taking the lead on recovery efforts in downtown Rangoon.

111. (SBU) FOOD, WATER AND FUEL: Food, water, and fuel continue to be continued to be in short supply throughout Rangoon, with sources reporting the situation in Irrawaddy Division as critical. Displaced persons fleeing Patheingyi told emboffs that there had been no food or water available since the afternoon of Friday, May 2 and official relief assistance was non-existent. Seven CNG filling stations were open on May 7 in Rangoon, five more than yesterday. Econ contacts told us the CNG pipelines were operational and that there is no shortage of CNG. However, the filling stations need power

to compress the natural gas and most still do not have city power or sufficient fuel to power their generators. Most of the city's busses and taxis use CNG.

¶12. (SBU) TRANSPORTATION: A few public busses were seen running to and from Rangoon the morning of May 7, although most remained out of service. A P/E FSN confirmed that one main bus route was charging normal, pre-cylcone, fees.

¶13. (SBU) ELECTRICITY: Some city power was restored in limited areas of downtown Rangoon and around the Embassy. As of the morning of May 7, Traders Hotel, near Sule Pagoda, was running on city power. A French diplomat reported that the Summit Parkview Hotel, where he moved after his home was destroyed, has city electricity. Econ contacts reported the government had prioritized six downtown townships for the restoration of electric power. However, the vast majority of Rangoon remained without power.

¶14. (SBU) LAW AND ORDER: DEA contacts reported the Burmese Director General of Police has been in Rangoon to personally oversee the police which have been supplemented by soldiers. There was a visible police and army presence downtown and in some more affluent neighborhoods, but many of our contacts reported little or no presence in other areas.

¶15. (SBU) VISAS: Save the Children's (STC) director in Rangoon reported some of their staff have entered the country but all on existing visas. He could not confirm whether any new visas had been issued for STC staff. The Minister of Social Welfare told STC they could bring in relief supplies by air, but so far STC has not received official permission to do so. We are meeting with UN and other donors now to

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find out if they have received any indications of movement on visas.

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